

# II John

## **1. Introduction V. 1-3**

### V. 1

1. The writer is the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21) with the human instrument believed to be John the apostle.
2. John wrote 5 books: John, I, II, III John, and Revelation.
3. "The elder" = a title of a pastor; advanced in life; probably in context refers to age since John the apostle was elderly in age and the last surviving apostle, thus he would not need an elaborate introduction; may also apply to him as pastor of the church (Ephesus) from where he wrote this epistle.
4. The date of this epistle is believed to be about 90 AD.
5. "Unto the elect lady" = some think this applies to a church; while it is alright to do this (II Tim. 3:16) I believe the language of this short letter indicates this is a personal letter to a choice woman in a local church.
6. "Elect" = chosen by God to obtain salvation through Christ; based upon three things: (I Peter 1:2; II Thess. 2:13)
  - A. "Foreknowledge" = He sees and knows what He can do in one's heart (I Sam 16:7); a potter knows his clay.
  - B. "Sanctification of the Spirit" = refers to the setting apart work of the Holy Spirit called "godly sorrow" (II Cor. 7:10), "Holy Ghost conviction," or "reproval" (John 16:8-11) whereby the Holy Spirit brings one out of the kingdom of darkness and sphere of the Devil's control into the kingdom of light and the sphere of God's control; this works repentance and produces faith in the sinner.
  - C. "Obedience" = point when repentance and faith are worked then a sinner can repent and believe unto salvation thus obedience; man must repent and believe to be saved. (Luke 13:3; Acts 16:31)
7. "Her children" = offspring, both boys and girls.
8. "Whom" = includes both the mother and children; there is no mention of her husband which may indicate she was a widow; had he been living some allusion would have been made to him even if he was not a Christian.
9. "Love" = to love dearly.
10. "Truth" = truly; certainly; sincerely; the article "the" is not present in the Greek thus he is not meaning he loved them because they embraced the truth (the body of revealed truth) but he was sincerely attached to them.
11. "All they" = possible referring to all those Christians who had an opportunity of knowing this lady and her children due to her hospitable character and being host to many as they traveled her way. (Rom. 12:13; I Peter 4:9)
12. "Known" = to know by experience; the tense is perfect which means that at a point in past time these came to know experientially the truth and still know it; refers to believers who gained the knowledge of God by personal experience of salvation.
13. "The truth" = the Greek has the definite article "the" here, thus meaning the whole body of revealed truth; applies to the Lord Jesus. (John 14:6)

### V. 2

1. "The truth" = the whole body of revealed truth.
2. "For the sake" = because of; they love this family because they (ones loving) love the truth.

3. "Dwelleth" = to remain; abide.
4. "Us" = Christians; saints; this is another reason "the truth" applies to Jesus for He dwells in the saints in the person of the Holy Ghost. (John 6:56; 14:17-18; Rom. 8:9-11; Col. 1:27)
5. "Shall be with us for ever" = makes one heart its permanent home, and will be with us in all worlds while ceaseless ages roll away.
6. Some would try to say that you just need a Word (truth) only salvation. Not so! You need the Living Word (Truth) who is Jesus to be saved. (John 1:4a; I John 5:12) The human instrument, John, made it plain in I John 5:9-13 that one must believe the record (the written Word; truth) because it points to the living Word (Jesus; the truth) and in Him is life.

### V. 3

1. "Grace" = unmerited favor; undeserving favor; refers to sanctifying grace, not justifying, for he is writing to a lady that has been saved or justified; this grace enables a saint of God to overcome obstacles in their daily living and keep on keeping on for the glory of God; we have access (freedom to enter through the assistance or favor of another) into this grace by faith (Rom. 5:2); this grace *is* (not just *has been* or *will be*) sufficient.
2. "With" = accompany.
3. "Mercy" = kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them; describes help bestowed on the helpless; mercy keeps us from getting what we deserve; this is not talking about justifying mercy, because this lady has been justified, but sanctifying mercy which keep us from being destroyed each time we sin and it is ours for the asking. (Heb. 4:15-16)
4. "Peace" = a state of tranquility of one's soul and spirit in the midst of troubling circumstances based on the consciousness of a right relationship with God; refers to sanctifying peace, not justifying of Rom. 5:1, for he is writing to a lady who has been justified (elect); this peace is the peace of God that passes all understanding, even in troubled times (Phil. 4:6-7); we (saints) are fighting *from* victory and *not for* victory.
5. These three words were used as a greeting and John may have used them as such, but I think he meant more than a greeting as we have just defined above.
6. Grace, mercy, and peace can only come "from" God described as the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Son of the Father and also God. (John 10:30)
7. In his writings, John dwells much on the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is the "Son of the Father."
8. "Lord" = supreme in authority; master; controller; owner; Jehovah of the OT.
9. "Jesus" = the earthly name of God incarnate (God robed with flesh); the Saviour of mankind.
10. "Christ" = the Anointed One; the Messiah of the OT.
11. "The Son of the Father" = a designation verifying the virgin born Son of God. (John 1:1,14; Luke 1:26-35)
12. "Truth" = sincerely; truly; no definite article.
13. "Love" = agape; God's kind of love produced by the aid of the Holy Spirit.
14. "In truth and love" = this phrase is not connected with the expression "the Son of the Father" as if it meant that He was His Son "in truth and love," but it is connected with "grace, mercy, and peace" referred to as a prayer that they might be manifested to this family in truth and love.

## **2. Practical Aspect: Practicing the Truth. V. 4-6**

### **V. 4**

1. John begins this section with a commendation.
2. "Rejoiced" = be glad; to rejoice exceedingly; related to the Hebrew word which represents a young sheep or lamb skipping and frisking over the hills for joy.
3. "Greatly" = exceedingly beyond measure; the Greek gives double emphasis of his rejoicing as being beyond measure.
4. "Found" = to get knowledge of; come to know; the tense is perfect which reveals a complete action in past time with existing results; at some point in past John came to know of this ladies' children walking in truth and he continues to know such because they continue to walk in truth.
5. "Walking" = to regulate one's life; to conduct one's self; the tense reveals a continuous action, a lifestyle.
6. "In truth" = according to truth; refers to that which is true in things pertaining to God and the duties of man in moral and religious truth.
7. "Of thy children" = the Greek construction indicates that some but not all of her children were walking in truth; her consolation was that she had some who were doing right and John commended those in order to encourage them to continue to do so.
8. "Have received" = to take to one's self.
9. "Commandment" = an order, command, or charge; a prescribed rule in accordance with which a thing is done; refers to the overall teaching of Scripture, rather than a specific verse.
10. "The Father" = represented as the source of law.

### **V. 5**

1. "And now" = at this time; the present; John turns to the reason for this letter.
2. "Beseech" = to request; entreat; beg.
3. "Lady" = a Christian woman to whom this epistle is written.
4. "Not as though I wrote a new commandment" = John asked nothing new but presumed that the command to love one another was understood as far as the gospel was known.
5. "From the beginning" = from the time the gospel was first made known; the Lord gave the command in John 13:34-35; 15:12; and John repeated it in I John 3:11 as well as here.
6. "Love" = love in action; God kind of love that is in every saint and should be growing. (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22)
7. "One another" = mutually; reciprocally, to return something given.
8. "We" = refers to all saints; John identifies himself with all Christians in this.

### **V. 6**

1. "This is love" = this is the proper expression or evidence of love to God.
2. "Walk" = to regulate one's life; to conducts one's life; the tense reveals continuous action.
3. "After" = according to.
4. "His commandments" = the overall teaching of Scripture.
5. This first phrase defines love as behaviour that continually moves according to the standard of God's command. Love is more than an uncontrollable emotion. It is action for the good of another, functioning within the limits of all God's other commands.
6. "This is the commandment" = this is His great and peculiar commandment, the one

by which His disciples are to be peculiarly characterized and by which they are to be distinguished in the world; on this commandment hang all the Scripture (Mat. 22:36-40); we cannot love one another until we love Him.

7. The second phrase of this verse reiterates that this was the original intent of Christ's command to love--to regulate (walk) one's life in obeying the Lord's commands.

### **3. Doctrinal Aspect: Protecting the Truth. V. 7-11**

V. 7

1. "For" = because; the reason for the explanation of verses 5-6 was necessary because many deceivers had appeared, hoping to take advantage of the hospitality and love shown by unsuspecting Christians.

2. "Deceivers" = impostors; corrupters; those who mislead or lead into error.

3. "Are entered into the world" = have appeared among the inhabitants of the earth.

4. "Confess" = to say the same thing as another; to agree with; negated by "not"; these deceivers maintain that Christ assumed the appearance only of a man and was not really incarnate (virgin-born Son of God robed in flesh); in I John 4:1-3, John had already stated this criteria for testing the spirits.

5. "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" = means God was born as a baby through a virgin's womb. (John 1:1,14)

6. One who does not confess this is a "deceiver" = imposter; false teacher who will lead you into error.

7. "Antichrist" = adversary of the Messiah; against Christ; one who denies that Christ has come in the flesh; one who does not pretend to be Christ but proposing to do the work of Christ.

8. There is a definite article "the" before "deceiver" and "antichrist" to bring out sharply each separate phase, though one individual is referred to. This one individual can be expected (I John 2:22; II Thess. 2:3) but many types are present realities. (I John 2:18)

V. 8

1. "Look" = to turn the thoughts or direct the mind to a thing; to consider; contemplate; examine; the idea is, that they (the lady and her children; yourselves) should be particularly on their guard, and that their first care should be to secure their own hearts, so that they should not be exposed to the dangerous attacks of error; the tense indicates a continual watchfulness.

2. "Lose" = put an end to; ruin; negated by "not"; John's warning was to prevent the destruction of the work which he, as well as others, had a part in and to prevent the lady and her children from losing their rewards.

3. "Wrought" = to work; to labor; carries the idea of work that involves labor and exertion; those who had brought the gospel invested much time and energy in reaching this lady and her family and John did not want that work destroyed.

4. "But" = contrast.

5. "Receive" = to receive what is due and promised.

6. "Full" = complete; lacking nothing.

7. "Reward" = day's wages which each worker will get; refers to that which will be granted to a life uniformly consistent and faithful; all that God has to bestow on His people that are faithful. (I Cor. 3:11-15; 9:27; "castaway" = disqualified for reward)

V. 9

1. "Whosoever" = each; individually.
2. "Transgresseth" = to overstep; neglect; violate; to go past or pass over; to run ahead.
3. "Abideth" = to remain; to continue in; negated by "not."
4. "Doctrine" = teaching; refers to the doctrine taught by Christ and also His apostles.
5. John laid down a Biblical principle: If a person kept running ahead of what Christ taught, adding his own ideas to His teachings, refusing to stay within the framework of the original gospel, and insisted on adding their own concepts (the Gnostic teachers loved to boast of hidden truths of salvation which they alone could reveal), that person "hath not God" = is not saved; is lost; has not knowledge of the true God. (Rom. 8:9)  
This is a hard statement but true!
6. In the last phrase of this verse, John states the positive side of this contrast; one who remains within the boundaries of the original teachings of Christ is the one who truly has God (is saved). In fact he has both the Son and the Father. (I John 2:23-24) It is essential to hold to the true doctrines which Christ taught if one is to continue rightly and if one is saved he does continue in His Word. (John 8:31; Heb. 3:6,14)

#### V. 10

1. "Bring" = to bring forward in speaking; negated by "not."
2. "This doctrine" = the teaching taught by Christ.
3. "If" = the use of this word in the Greek construction assumes that this is a statement of reality; this lady had provided hospitality for some who had claimed to be representatives of the gospel but were deceivers; John warns her to "receive him not in your house."
4. "Receive" = to admit; negated by "not"; don't let such a one in your house to buy their material, to listen to their message, or meet them with a friendly greeting that could be construed as agreeing with their false doctrine; don't receive them in your house! An example: Jehovah's Witnesses, for they abide not in the doctrine of Christ; therefore they have not God.
5. "Neither bid him God speed" = do not greet him with a usual greeting (Luke 10:5); do not wish him joy; the phrase expresses a common form of salutation as when we wish one health, success, and prosperity as they go on their way; but to do such to one who promotes false doctrine would be wishing him success in what he is doing; we cannot wish any one success in a career of sin and error.
6. Some say that is not Christian. It is too hard. I say it is Bible and needs to be practiced. Paul in essence said "let them go on to hell" in Gal. 1:8-9.
7. This holds true for us today as well as this lady in her day.

#### V. 11

1. John concludes by giving the reason it is wrong to provide loving hospitality for such people. It may seem harmless to speak words of greeting, but when such a greeting becomes participation in the evil deeds of an apostate, it is wrong.
2. "Partaker" = partner; sharer.
3. "Deeds" = that which one undertakes to do; enterprise; work; described as "evil" = wicked; bad; results in loss of rewards.
4. It is to be kept in mind that the churches often met in private homes and if travelling deceivers were allowed to spread their doctrines in these homes and then sent on with endorsement (bid God speed), there was no way of escaping responsibility for the harm wrought by these promoters of evil.

#### **4. Conclusion. V. 12-13**

##### **V. 12**

1. "Having many things to write unto you" = John had many things he would like to say to this lady, but he felt it best not to write it with paper and ink, but wait to tell her in person--face to face.
2. "Paper" = really not paper as we think of paper today, because paper was not invented until long after this period; probably papyrus, the most common writing material of this time and also comparatively cheap; it was made in abundance in Egypt from the papyrus plant.
3. "Ink" = made of soot and water, with a mixture of some species of gum to give it consistency and durability; the instrument or pen used to write was made of a sharpened reed; the mention of "paper and ink" may indicate that John wrote this letter with his own hand instead of using a secretary as was common in that day; this may be the reason for the brevity of this letter.
4. "Trust" = to hope; implies he was expecting to visit her.
5. "Speak" = to talk.
6. "Face to face" = really mouth to mouth; the phrase is a common one and denotes conversation with another person.
7. "Joy" = gladness; to have pleasure.
8. "Full" = to cause to abound.
9. The Greek construction pictures a joy that is brought to fullness, then continues to be full to the point of overflowing. The same construction is found in I John 1:4.

##### **V. 13**

1. "Greet" = to enfold in the arms; embrace; in context means that they give their regards, hellos, hugs, and kisses to this lady and her children.
2. The failure to mention this lady's sister's greeting probably indicates that she was dead or at least not present in the area from which John wrote this letter.
3. Notice she was also called "elect" = meaning she had been chosen by God to obtain salvation through Christ. (See notes on verse 1, #3)
4. "Amen" = so be it; may it be fulfilled.

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